

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, comprising the steps of:
 - acquiring a digital image;
 - segmenting the digital image into a plurality of sections, wherein each section is sized to fit on a laminate flooring plank and contains a distinct portion of the digital image;
 - creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections; and
 - printing the digital layout.
2. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, as recited in claim 1, wherein acquiring the digital image comprises the steps of scanning an image and saving the scanned image into a digital format.
3. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, as recited in claim 1, wherein creating the digital layout comprises the steps of arranging the plurality of sections so that they fit on a sheet of base material and there are predetermined spaces between each section.
4. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of formatting the digital image and enhancing the digital image.
5. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, as recited in claim 4, wherein formatting the digital image includes the step of resizing the digital image to the dimensions required to fit a flooring area.
6. A method for preparing an image for use on a laminate floor, as recited in claim 4, wherein enhancing the digital image includes the step of sharpening the digital image to obtain a desired image quality.

7. A method for creating a laminate floor, comprising the steps of:
acquiring a digital image;
segmenting the digital image into a plurality of sections, wherein each section is sized to fit on a laminate flooring plank and contains a distinct portion of the digital image;
creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections;
printing the digital layout;
securing the printed digital layout to a sheet of base material;
dividing the sheet of base material, with the printed digital layout secured thereon, into a plurality of flooring planks; and
assembling the plurality of flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce the digital image on the laminate floor.
8. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 7, wherein acquiring the digital image comprises the steps of scanning an image and saving the scanned image into a digital format.
9. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 7, wherein creating the digital layout comprises the steps of arranging the plurality of sections to fit on the sheet of base material with predetermined spaces between each section.
10. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 7, further comprising the steps of formatting the digital image and enhancing the digital image.
11. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 10, wherein formatting the digital image includes the step of resizing the digital image to the dimensions required to fit a flooring area.
12. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 10, wherein enhancing the digital image includes the step of sharpening the digital image to obtain a desired image quality.
13. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 7, wherein securing the printed digital layout to the sheet of base material comprises the step of laminating the printed digital layout to the sheet of base material.

14. A method for creating a laminate floor, as recited in claim 7, wherein dividing the laminated sheet of base material into a plurality of floor planks comprises the steps of cutting the laminated sheet of base material into a plurality of floor planks, machining a tongue into one side of each floor plank, and machining a corresponding groove into a second side of each floor plank, opposite the tongue.